



FIZnews

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Page 1 of 2

New column on legal issues – May researchers re-use their own publications?

Karlsruhe, 20 October 2025 — A new column on legal issues has been launched on the FAIRagro blog. It deals with an issue many researchers are familiar with: What rights do I have to my own publications? The text is available in German and English and was created in collaboration with iRights.info:

[Die eigene Publikation \(nach-\)nutzen – das gilt – FAIRagro](#) or

<https://fairagro.net/en/how-to-reuse-your-own-publication/>

In this column, our colleague Lea Sophie Singson, Legal Data Steward at FAIRagro, explains how the rights to scientific articles and research data are structured after publication. For as soon as a publication is submitted to a journal, the contracts between the author and the publisher regulate how the work may be used—from advance publication as a preprint to further use by the authors themselves.

The column deals with the following items:

- Exclusive or non-exclusive rights of use: Depending on the contract, authors may retain rights or include others in parallel with publication.
- Preprints: Parts of the research can be published even before peer review, if the contract allows for it.

- Secondary publication rights: In Germany, authors can republish certain scientific articles after twelve months, even if they have granted exclusive rights to the publisher. Requirements include publicly funded research and publication in regularly appearing anthologies.
- Sharing with colleagues: Even if exclusive rights have been granted, copyright law allows disclosure to a defined group for non-commercial research purposes.
- Research data: Unlike texts, raw data or curated data sets are often not protected by copyright and can be freely shared and reused.

The column clearly shows that it is worthwhile to know the rights to your own publications. They make reuse easier and help to make research results more widely available.

For more information, feel free to contact Lea Sophie Singson at lea-sophie.singson@fiz-karlsruhe.de.

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